



2012 Duathlon National Championship
Town Hall Meeting Discussions
April 28, 2012 at 5:00pm – 6:00pm
Tucson, Arizona

2012 Duathlon Town Hall Meeting

Tim Yount: Introduces Tonya Armstrong

Tonya Armstrong:

- All attendees were welcomed to Tucson for the 2012 Duathlon National Championship.
- Athletes were thanked for competing at Nationals.
- The USAT race committee, Jeff Dyrek, and all the volunteers were thanked for a very organized, safe, and well run event.
- Athletes who participated in the focus groups were thanked for their valuable feedback.
- Athletes were reminded to get their drink tickets provided by the Duathlon Committee.
- Tonya explained the mission of the USAT Duathlon Commission: To grow the sport of duathlon at the grass roots level.
- The Duathlon Committee was presented: *Co-Chairs:* Bill Burnett & Tonya Armstrong *Active Members:* Tim Armstrong, Brian Grasky, Anne Curi Presig, Jim Presig, Bill Rule, Carol Whipple, Dave Lasorsa, Don Forgione, Jason Digman, Judi Carbury, Stephen Koranda, Ginny Poyner and Ken Velky.
 - In attendance:
 - Ginny Poyner
 - Brian Grasky
 - Tonya Armstrong
 - Dave Lasorsa
 - Don Forgione
 - Dean Maruna
 - We are looking for a few women to add to the subcommittee. If you have an interest in volunteering, please email sportdevelopment@usatriathlon.org.
 - In the winter edition of USA Triathlon Magazine, we asked our membership to volunteer time to support the duathlon initiatives for 2012 and 2013. We would like to thank the following athletes for making a commitment to grow the sport of duathlon – Brian Moldover, Gene Mueller, Steve Szalus, Joette Bergeson, David McMillian, Fran Coiro, Steven Jonas, Susan Bianchi, George Pierce, Craig Shelley, Ken Velky and Nathan Borchers. If you are interested in helping with the duathlon movement, please email our Sport Development team at sportdevelopment@usatriathlon.org.

Recap of the 2011 Town Hall Meeting

- *Tonya Armstrong:* In 2011, the duathlon committee unveiled their 30 page working document to grow the sport of duathlon at the grassroots level. This plan was to ensure the long term group potential of duathlon. It was also created to help improve the organization and growth of duathlon as a whole.

- The committee picked 11 items from the plan to consider working on for the 2012-2013 season. The committee prioritized the plan and developed four sub-committees to build on these initiatives: Duathlon Regional Series Sub-Committee, Promotions Sub-Committee, Adult Community Involvement Sub-Committee and Youth Community Involvement Sub-Committee.
- During the 2011 Town Hall Meeting, athletes and committee representatives had a successful question and answer session.
 - Few things we learned from the discussion:
 - We need our athletes to work with duathlon race directors to sanction their events with USA Triathlon. Athletes need to explain the benefits they see as athletes.
 - Athletes believed a youth component would add more value to Duathlon Nationals. We took your advice and added the “Kid’s Fun Run” for 2012.
 - Work with USAT certified coaches to build on the sport of duathlon. The hope would be to bring more athletes to regional and national championship events. Our goal is to develop duathlon specific webinars to educate our coaches and race directors in the next year.
 - Athletes believed adding a duathlon to a current triathlon would be an affordable way to grow the sport. This has not been placed in the current plan. The subcommittee is working to add this strategy to their agenda for the upcoming season.
 - Meeting minutes can be found on the USAT website for more details of the 2011 Town Hall Meeting.

2012 Committee Activity

1. Duathlon Regional Series Sub-Committee
 - Chair, Don Forgione
 - Committee Members: Ginny Poyner and Judy Carbury
 - *Don Forgione*: Regional Series Sub-committee has been working with the USAT regional councils to have them assist with the selections instead of dictating to them the events the committee would like to see part of the Series.
 - List of Regional Races that have been nominated:
 - *Northeast*: Shamrock Duathlon
 - *Mid-Atlantic*: Cary Duathlon
 - *Mideast*: Grand Haven Duathlon
 - *Florida*: Multi Race Duathlon
 - *Southeast*: Powerman Alabama
 - *Rocky Mountain*: TBA

- *Midwest*: Sartell Apple Duathlon
 - *South Midwest*: Frost Your Fanny
 - *Pacific Northwest*: TBA
 - *Southwest*: TBA
 - We were hoping to have this Series the summer of 2012, with the Series starting after Nationals (April) and running until the following year's Nationals. The hope was that all the races would provide the "lead up" to the 2013 Championship. However with several of the regions not making a selection, we decided to start the series in 2013 and run the program on the calendar year. So, the next step is to finalize the missing events and begin discussions with these directors on the recommended program.
 - The Series will create synergy with our youth program and adult program. We want to use this as a focal point to funnel people into the sport.
 - We haven't looked at what's feasible or appropriate for awards or other perks for the Series; this will be discussed shortly.
 - The best thing we can all do as duathletes is make this sport less invisible. I ask you all as members, to encourage people to give duathlon a try.
 - We have an opportunity to give more accessibility to the sport. We're hoping the regional Series will help build on it.
2. Promotions Sub-Committee
- Chair, Jason Digman
 - Committee members: Carol Whipple and Bill Rule.
 - *Tonya Armstrong*: Goal of the Promotions Sub-committee: Creating marketing and promotional avenues by which we can expand the reach of the sport.
 - Strategy will include, in part, developing stories to be placed on the USAT website, in newsletters, and magazines.
 - Activities by the Promotions Sub-committee
 - Articles posted on USAT website
 - *Duathlon Racing* article by Jason Digman posted in most recent edition of Multisport Zone.
 - Activity by the National Office for Nationals
 - Tucson Marathon Expo Booth
 - We found that there was a lot of interest about duathlon and the event. We learned for future expos that we will need a promotional piece explaining the sport to new athletes.
 - Article was published in the April issue of the Arizona Tailwinds magazine.

- Posted Nationals event on free internet event calendars such as Competitor Group, GetsetAZ.com, Trifind.com, Runningusa.com, Racecenter.com
 - Several e-mail blasts to a 21,000 person duathlon database as well as 950+ club membership database.
 - Past Duathlon Nationals Participant email about the referral program
 - Ventana Medical Systems received a poster and postcards to promote to employees
 - Over 50 bike and run shops received this information
 - Recent Activity
 - Kids Fun Run on Friday
 - 82 youth participants at the race – The kids loved the event, the medals and the food.
 - Arizona Distance Classic Goodie bag insert
 - Referral Program-Drawing at awards ceremony
 - Tucson Training Program – Brian Grasky
 - TriFest at Tri-Sports-Brian Grasky
 - Duathlon Regional Series
 - The team will work with the Duathlon Regional Series Sub-committee as well as USAT Marketing & Communication team to promote the Series nationwide.
3. Adult Age Group Programming sub-committee
- Chair: Brian Grasky.
 - Committee Members: Dean Maruna, Tim Armstrong, Stephen Koranda, Tonya Armstrong
 - *Tonya Armstrong:* Brian Grasky has worked on a program for Duathlon Nationals to introduce duathlon to the local community. He has worked with the local YMCA to develop a simple training plan for these athletes to compete in the participatory wave at Nationals.
 - *Brian Grasky:* The Age Group Sub-committee sees two reasons to why the numbers are still low for the sport of duathlon – first, the knowledge of duathlon is limited. Second, there is not a lot of emphasis put on races by triathletes, race directors, media and/or sponsors.
 - What we would like to see in this committee is not only to increase knowledge of the sport but also increased opportunities/programs to boost participation.
 - Duathlon is a great beginner sport or a stepping stone into the multisport arena. The barriers to entry are a lot less than triathlon. A novice athlete doesn't have to worry about the swim, training, wetsuits, swimming gear.

- The goal of this committee is to target new athletes for the sport. The program we've developed for novice athletes to compete at nationals includes educational courses and training.
 - The program for Nationals started with an academic session – what is multisport? How do you get into it? How do you train for it? This is followed by training programs on the sprint distance race course.
 - Where we're going with this program? We would like to encourage certified coaches in areas that have duathlon races to implement this program.
 - In the future, the committee will encourage race directors to put on a duathlon or add a duathlon as a viable option to their race calendar, in hopes of increasing the number of races and participation across the country.
 - Locally, we have race directors who include a duathlon with their triathlon. Unfortunately, it's marketed as that alternative thing you do if you don't swim. I think we'll need to change that perspective and market it as its own sport.
 - How can we do this? I have developed a training plan for this beginner program to implement at the community level – local YMCA's/Recreation Facilities. The committee is going to reach out to Certified Coaches across the country for additional feedback. Once the plan has been approved, we'll get this program out to the coaches through email blasts, meetings and webinars with help from the National Office.
4. Youth Programming Sub-Committee
- Committee Members: Dave Lasorsa, Anne Curi Preisig and Jim Preisig.
 - *Tonya*: We are in the research stage of this project. We have pulled a list of certified youth & junior coaches, a list of youth multisport events across the country as well as had communications with a local recreation facility in Vermont to support youth programming. They are working to develop a training plan that will engage youth athletes at the community level.
 - Introduced Ken Velky as the new chair for the youth committee
 - *Dave Lasorsa*: How many parents/grandparents do we have? How many of your kids have done a duathlon or triathlon?
 - Years ago, my son competed in the youth race for the Dannon Series. I remember cheering for him while riding my bike along beside him. We were allowed to do that at the time. He finished the race that day and I still have a photo of the two of us smiling at the finish. It was a great father/son moment.
 - My goal is to bring that family affair back again. My family loved that part of the Dannon event.
 - The committee is currently in the research stage.
 - Our first goal was to Identify youth races of all disciplines

- We found there were 41 youth duathlons and 361 triathlons in 2010.
 - We plan to send an email to the race directors of the top 10 youth triathlon events with the following questions being asked:
 - What they are currently doing with duathlon?
 - What would be involved to add duathlon youth component to your current race?
 - We think this will be a small investment for a race directors and a viable component to grow the sport.
 - There is a non-sanctioned race in Portland, OR that supports a multisport festival weekend
 - There are a combination of duathlons
 - The race company rents the fair grounds and makes it a family affair
 - How can we get more race directors to support this family initiative?
 - Kids love Swag
 - i. T-shirts
 - ii. Medals & Trophy
 - iii. Podiums for recognizing kids
 - iv. Other athlete Recognition ideas
 - We need to work on youth recognition
 - i. Youth are currently recognized by USAT through the Youth Elite Program and a small section in the USAT magazine.
 - We need to work on community involvement
 - i. Introduce duathlon at local level through schools and fitness centers
 - ii. Create educational posters/post cards
 - iii. Youth specific event calendars
 - iv. Youth specific training programs
 - v. Youth Duathlon Race in a box for race directors
 - Improve duathlon's presence on the USAT website
 - i. Add a youth component for duathlon
 - Mileage Tracking Program
 - i. Allow kids to track miles in the bike and run disciplines. Kids enjoy seeing where they stand with others across the nation.
5. Audience Discussion – Questions & Answers
- *Audience:* As competitive duathletes, we do not see duathlon as a “beginner” sport.

- *Brian Grasky*: Duathlon has fewer barriers than triathlon. There is not a swim requirement. Many athletes new to multisport have a fear of water and/or open water in a many cases. We can capitalize on that by increasing participation with new athletes.
- *Audience*: The sport of duathlon is harder than a triathlon and that's where the marketing should be focused.
 - We should be challenging triathletes to a duathlon
 - As a governing body, we need to challenge our athletes.
 - We need to market duathlons like they do in the mud runs.
 - It takes good marketing to get the numbers up.
- *Brian Grasky*: Keep in mind, there are two ways to grow the sport of duathlon
 - Increase participation with new athletes
 - Increase participation with already established multisport athletes (triathletes).
 - Our goals as a committee is to educate people on the sport of duathlon
 - Local races will need to market duathlon to their communities. They will need to reach out to the competitive and non-competitive athletes.
 - We will want to have beginners try a duathlon for at least a year and then move into other disciplines as they progress through our sport.
 - From the competitive side, we can market duathlon as a tough sport to existing multisport athletes/members.
 - We will encourage race directors to add a duathlon to their already existing event.
- *Audience*: I can count the number of duathlons on one hand in Southern California. I'm a president of a club and my athletes want to know where they can go and compete in duathlon events.
 - Can we develop a regional series to support this need?
 - Can we incentivize race directors financially through a national sponsor?
- *Tim Yount*: We need race directors to help promote the sport. We have to move in a direction outside of the region to see to fruition, this Series.
- *Audience*: USAT hasn't branded duathlon as duathlon. It's seen as the step child of triathlon.
 - Duathlon needs to be rebranded by our governing body.
 - USAT can purchase gear and brand it appropriately
 - The finisher medals to our national championship do not say duathlon
 - USAT needs to recognizes the athletes that are here today as duathletes
 - It's been difficult to work with the region to get a regional duathlon event in the Pacific Northwest & Southwest
 - Is there a way to compensate race directors to promote duathlon?
- *Tim Yount*: These are valid points and it's being discussed at the National Office.
 - One of the things to note, USAT is our corporate name. USA Triathlon has to remain the same. As a governing body, USA Triathlon does need to promote the sport better. We will work closely with our marketing team and make sure information about the sport is not hidden or buried.

- *Audience:* Early this week, I stepped off a plane in the Tucson Airport and looked up at the sign “Welcome to the USA Triathlon Duathlon National Championship”. It was a great way to recognize the event and us as duathletes.
- *Tim Yount:* That’s something our National Events team and the city arranged. We hope it generated a lot of interest about the race and sport.
- *Audience:* The issues with duathlon are the same with our other disciplines – aquathlon, off-road and aquabike.
 - Have we considered a qualification email for duathlon like you do triathlon?
- *Tim Yount:* Know that the email for Age Group Nationals is for a qualifying event. When qualification standards are approved for duathlon, we will build around that concept. But, since duathlons are sanctioned with USAT, we will work on an email to encourage athletes to attend Nationals in 2013.
- *Audience:* Have you offered a relay for Duathlon Nationals?
- *Tim Yount:* We offered a relay last year but only had 4 groups participate. We may rethink this concept later down the road.
- *Tim Yount:* Just note there are many things going on in the organization. We have a number of plans being developed for the other disciplines. We will look at bundling our marketing so we capture a lot of people that cross over between each sport. As we mentioned, we need to do better at marketing duathlon. The reason we have a Town Hall meeting is to hear new ideas and concepts. There is impetus for change; we need to make changes with our marketing, branding, and significant events to help grow the sport of duathlon.
- *Tonya Armstrong:* Thank you for attending the third annual Town Hall meeting. Please pick up the new book *Duathlon Training and racing for Ordinary Mortals, Getting started and staying with it* by Steven Jonas.
- End of Town Hall